

Drug Interdiction Along the Southwest Border: U.S. Counterdrug Policy, History and future Implications

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**Drug Interdiction Along the U.S. Southwest Border: U.S.
Counterdrug Policy, History and Future Implications**

by

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ABSTRACT

Subject. Drug Interdiction Along the Southwest Border: U.S. Counterdrug Policy, History and Future Implications.

Purpose. Demonstrate historical, policy, organizational and intelligence management deficiencies have hampered U.S. counterdrug efforts along the southwest border.

Scope. Emphasis on U.S. southwest counterdrug deficiencies caused by national and regional programmatic, policymaking and organizational shortcomings.

Summary. Drug trafficking, a central issue of dispute with Mexico and other source and transit nations, also threatens their sovereignty and U.S. security. U.S. border interdiction efforts, to include military, have had more political impact, than serious effect, on the cartels. Implementation of the NDCS is deficient, though current strategic focus is sound. Intelligence management and interagency efficiency is poor. DoD will be a part of the solution.

Recommendations. Disband JTF-6; replace with a JIATF (Joint Interagency Task Force.) DoD should change counterdrug tasking policy and continue ban on ground D&M missions. Improve intelligence management, refine MOE's and use OSINT more. ONDCP continues current level of supply and demand reduction through future NDCS and active leadership in interagency process.

Conclusions. U.S. must seize initiative to protect own vulnerabilities and attack those of traffickers. National interest of counterdrug is important, but not the absolute highest priority. It is a major quality of life issue. U.S. concepts of defense are changing and federal infrastructure is slow to adapt. Opportunities abound to shift initiative from traffickers to U.S.

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DISCLAIMER

ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER 1

Setting the Stage: The Drug Trade and America

Everyday an average of 5000 northbound trucks pass through various U.S. ports of entry sited along the 2000 mile wide border between the U.S. and Mexico. Of these, two hundred might be inspected for contraband such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana. This contraband is not limited to commercial truck transit. Legal and illegal pedestrian, aircraft, motor vehicle and waterborne crossings, as well as a new surge in rail traffic, far outnumber the volume of trucks passing through these ports.¹

Americans spend \$49 billion on illegal drugs annually; \$31 billion on cocaine, \$7 billion on heroin, \$9 billion on marijuana and \$2 billion on other substances such as hallucinogens or methamphetamine.² More than one million people are arrested each year in the United States on drug-related charges. One study revealed that almost two-thirds of adult males arrested in the U.S. tested positive for some illegal substance. Over one-third of U.S. violent crimes and near half the homicides committed are drug related. Other compelling data state that "...drug-related illness, death and crime cost the nation \$66.9 billion...(each year)" and every U.S. inhabitant pays almost \$1,000 annually to "...cover the expense of extra health care, law enforcement, automobile mishaps, crime and lost productivity resulting from substance abuse."³

¹ John Ward Anderson and William Branigin, "Flood of Contraband Hard to Stop", *The Washington Post*, 2 November 1997, Sec. A-30.

² U.S./Mexico High Level Contact Group on Drug Control (HLCG), *U.S./Mexico Bi-National Drug Threat Assessment*, May 1997, 33.

³ Dorothy P. Rice, Sander Kelman, Leonard S. Miller and Sarah Dunmeyer, *The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Mental Illness: 1985*, report submitted to the Office of Financing and Coverage Policy of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (San Francisco, CA: Institute for Health and Aging, University of California, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990.)

Today there are 2.7 million regular consumers (greater than 12 events per year) and an expanding pool of occasional users.⁴

The international drug trade is a \$300-400 billion per year industry, which dwarfs the GDP of many of the world's nations. Participants in this trade have formed cartels, modernized, and have plotted industrial scale strategies. Globalization and regionalization of economies, within this information age has only enhanced their effectiveness. Within these infrastructures it has increasingly become more difficult to differentiate the corrupt from the legitimate.

Legislatures, media and other public and private fora have vigorously debated the U.S. drug problem and potential solutions. The debate often focused on what type of crisis the problem has become: law enforcement, public health or national security. The crisis is a combination of the three, evolving from law enforcement, through public health, and now a growing threat to the nation's security. Currently, all national systems of law enforcement, health care and the military are actively engaged, either reducing the supply of, or demand for illegal drugs.

This paper's purpose is to reexamine the relevancy of military participation in domestic counterdrug enforcement with emphasis on key southwest border federal and regional counterdrug infrastructure. Threat severity, trafficking weaknesses and U.S. strengths and vulnerabilities will also be examined. Finally, key policies, the national interest toward drug interdiction, effectiveness of strategic and operational organizations and southwest border initiatives will be assessed with a view toward the future.

⁴ U.S./Mexico HLCG, May 1997, 55.

To achieve this the following will be discussed:

- (1) *a short history of U.S. counternarcotics enforcement*
- (2) *events leading to the creation of the Office of National Drug Control and Policy (ONDCP)*
- (3) *"militarization" of U. S. counterdrug efforts*
- (4) *an overview of drug trafficking organizations south of the US. border*
- (5) *description of the major southwest border counterdrug organizations*
- (6) *analysis of centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities*
- (7) *examination of policy and strategic/operational/tactical failures and their impacts*
- (8) *the national interest and drug interdiction*
- (9) *the national security threat caused by drug trafficking*
- (10) *significance of actionable intelligence and its management and dissemination*
- (11) *a critique of participating organizations with a view toward the future*

CHAPTER 2

U.S. Counterdrug Enforcement: A Brief History

The first federal department that took an active counterdrug interest was the Department of State early in the 20th century. Departmental officials monitored and diplomatically attempted to curtail a burgeoning opium trade from Southeast Asia. Formalized attempts were reflected in the Shanghai Conference on Narcotic Drugs in 1909 and the subsequent 1912 International Opium Convention. Multilaterally, little was resolved at these proceedings, but issues of national interest surfaced. The Harrison Narcotics Act was passed in 1914 which regulated traffic of opiates, cocaine, cannabis and other drugs within the U.S. and mandated physicians and pharmacists maintain detailed prescription records. This legislation set in motion a trend evident today called the "public awareness and action cycle." The three-part cycle revolves around how Americans perceive, understand and regulate use of drugs. First, if no medical proof of danger exists, there tends to be widespread acceptance of the drug and its use. Once medical, human and social costs are tabulated the public becomes very sensitized. Finally, citizens react by demanding legislation, treatment and law enforcement.⁵

The Treasury Department listed between 750,000 and 1.5 million drug addicts in a 1919 report. The figures were an estimate; they were never substantiated. During the Prohibition period the anti-drug sentiment in the nation also became stronger. In the early 1930's the Treasury Department created the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) and assigned its first director, Harry J. Anslinger who remained in that office until 1962.⁶

⁵ David Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotics Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 13.

⁶ Douglas Clark Kinder, "Bureaucratic Cold Warrior: Harry J. Anslinger and Illicit Narcotics Traffic" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 50, May 1981, 160-191.

The U.S. now had an agency solely dedicated to control illegal narcotics and adopted a hard line position throughout the 1930's focused on controlling the supply sources. The concept *controlling the source* persisted since then and found its way into multiple supply reduction strategies of this recent decade. During the early period of the FBN U.S. diplomats still found it difficult to conclude multilateral and bilateral counterdrug agreements with a number of countries. These diplomatic setbacks eventually undermined the political will of the American people who had desired international leadership policing the narcotics trade. Undeterred, the FBN, attempting to galvanize the American public, made two significant decisions, (1) they misrepresented the harmful effects of and exaggerated statistics regarding illegal drugs, and (2) ceased promoting drug education programs. Both these actions created a legacy of doubt about the federal government's credibility regarding drug interdiction and demand reduction.⁷

By 1950 the first government counterdrug agent was assigned overseas in Europe. Though criminal organizations in Latin America and Mexico were very active producing and distributing illegal substances, their respective governments strongly denied such activities and stated that U.S. drug problems originated with opium/heroin from Asia. In 1972 the first U.S. counterdrug agent was assigned to South America. Between 1969 and 1972 the first references that the illegal drug trade was linked to national security were publicized by the Nixon Administration.⁸ The infamous "Plumbers," an ad-hoc organization, was formed under the auspices of the Nixon White House and aggressively investigated, arranged prosecution of, or eliminated overseas drug smuggling organizations, often by unconventional means. Their

⁷ Kinder, 183.

⁸ Jefferson Morley and Malcolm Byrne, "The Drug War and National Security: The Making of a Quagmire, 1969-1973" *Dissent*, Winter 1989, 39.

methods ultimately brought political disaster to the Presidency as they repeatedly abused their authority and ventured into constitutional areas nowhere near their purview.

In spite of the "Plumbers" controversy, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was formed from an assortment of White House sponsored groups at the end of the Nixon period. The groups formed into the DEA were previously chartered to combat drug smuggling activities the Executive Branch viewed as major national threats.

The "White Paper on Drug Abuse" was published in 1975, which served as a precursor to the "Federal Drug Control Strategy" produced the following year. This first drug strategy conceptualized illegal drug trafficking to be both a law enforcement and public health problem. International politics was conspicuously absent.⁹ The strategy criticized counterproductive competition within and among law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and lack of necessary analytical capabilities to prosecute a counterdrug campaign. It also served as the template for today's National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS.) The current NDCS was designed to fit within the New Federalism Model, where federal planning and direction was implemented at national, state and local levels. In early versions of strategic counterdrug documents there were no references to design and implementation of observable *measures of effectiveness*.¹⁰

Citizens of the U.S. witnessed widespread use and the related problems caused by production and distribution of marijuana and hallucinogens in the 1960's and 1970's. Cocaine became the preeminent illegal substance of choice in the 1980's. President Ronald Reagan declared his "War on Drugs" on October 14, 1982 pledging to "end the menace." By 1986 he

⁹ *Federal Drug Control Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976)49.

¹⁰ Holden-Rhodes, 42.

signed a National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) that cited illegal drugs as a "threat to national security" and directed all federal agencies to become more active against this threat.¹¹

The Office of Technology Assessment stated in 1987:

"The nation's drug interdiction efforts suffer from a clear lack of direction. The responsibilities of the federal drug interdiction agencies are fragmented and overlapping. Data on drug smuggling, the trafficking system and interdiction activities are inadequate for effective planning and management. There is no clear correlation between the level of expenditures or effort devoted to interdiction and the long term availability of illegally imported drugs in the domestic market."¹²

The Genesis of ONDCP

The previous statement was one of many that helped form the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in 1988. The Director, ONDCP, a Cabinet-rank member of the executive branch, has oversight of national drug programs and is responsible for interagency coordination. He develops the National Drug Control Strategy but has limited statutory authority to compel support. He does, however, indirectly influence strategy implementation by other government agencies in two ways. The first is by direct access to the President advising him of the performance of various agencies. The second method is authority to assess and certify agencies through examining their budget cycles. The intent is to ensure adequate funds are programmed to meet Presidential counterdrug objectives.¹³ The Director develops the national counterdrug budget and allocates portions to participating federal agencies and some state initiatives. An example of the Director's influence took place in the Fall of 1997 when the current Director, retired army General Barry McCaffrey, publicly criticized DoD's counterdrug

¹¹ Steven Wisotsky, *Breaking the Impasse in the War on Drugs* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1986)3.

¹² 1987 Office of Technology Assessment

¹³ William W. Mendel and Murl D. Munger, *Strategic Planning and the Drug Threat*(Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997)23-24.

budget inadequacies for FY1998, claiming a \$141 million shortfall. Making clever use of the media, McCaffrey issued a directive to DoD to cover the fiscal shortfall and effectively squelched further debate or reluctance by DoD to comply.¹⁴

"Militarization" of the Counterdrug Efforts

U.S. military participation in the counterdrug campaign increased notably by the late 1980's. It originated from congressional attempts, under tremendous public pressure, to "do something." Hence, various attempts to legislate the military into action took place. Some extreme measures were proposed by Congress in 1988 to "seal the borders" with Mexico and allow soldiers to have de facto arrest powers. These proposals were defeated mostly by the efforts of Senator John Warner (R-Virginia.) That same year, Senator Pete Wilson (R-California) attempted, but failed to create a joint service command directing military drug interdiction.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1989 assigned three counterdrug missions to DoD: (1) act as the lead agency for Detection and Monitoring (D&M) of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the U.S. (2) integrate command, control, communications and technical intelligence into an effective network and (3) approve and fund state governors' plans for expanded use of the National Guard in support of state interdiction and enforcement.¹⁵

These legislative efforts of 1989 helped create Joint Task Force-Six which specifically focused on drug smuggling problems across the U.S./Mexico southwest border into the neighboring four states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

¹⁴ Bradley Graham, "McCaffrey Wants Pentagon To Spend More Against Drugs", *Washington Post*, November 7, 1997, Section A-3.

¹⁵ Peter Reuter, *Sealing the Borders: The Effects of Increased Military Participation in Drug Interdiction*, (Santa Barbara, CA: RAND, 1987) 1.

CHAPTER 3

Opponents From the South

Mexico's land mass, airspace and territorial waters are primary transit routes for South American cocaine into the United States. Roughly 70 percent, or 360 metric tons of the 514 metric tons of cocaine prepared for U.S. delivery transited via Mexico.¹⁶ Polydrug-trafficking organizations of Mexico have successfully expanded operations into diversified illegal and legal enterprises and the lucrative money laundering business. When cocaine flowed northward during the past decade, ancillary smuggling activities also increased proportionately. Weapons, cash, and stolen vehicles moved south while northbound illegal migrants and a variety of new drugs kept the border very active. Mexican drug trafficking organizations now dominate production and distribution of methamphetamines within the United States, with a consequent rise in consumption in the western and midwestern states.

Heroin, opium's byproduct, is also produced in significant quantities both in Mexico and South America. From the traffickers' perspective heroin makes long term business sense. Addicted heroin users tend to have longer life spans, generally uninterrupted by incidents that attract law enforcement and short term medical interventions, compared to the more violence-prone users of cocaine or methamphetamine. Since 1996 heroin eclipsed cocaine as the illegal drug of choice.¹⁷ This marketing strategy has demonstrated higher potential for

¹⁶ Hans A. Binnendijk and Patrick L. Clawson, eds., *Strategic Assessment: Flashpoints and Force Structure*, (Washington, D.C.:Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997) 75.

¹⁷ Col T.T. Kelley, USMC, Deputy Commander, Joint Task Force Six, interview by author, 20 October 1997.

profitability. Most marijuana smuggled into the U.S. comes from Mexico and is much more potent than crops cultivated a quarter of a century ago.¹⁸

La Empresa Coordinadora

Latin American illegal trafficking organizations, referred to as *La Empresa Coordinadora*, (loosely translated as "the coordinating enterprise,") have goals of money, power and infrastructure. Their functions are simple: basic production, refining, warehousing, transportation, wholesale/retail distribution, finance and protection. A loose confederation, they operate within family or long-standing patron-client relationships. Collectively, they are like interconnected snap-links, capable of functioning as stand-alone or united entities. Bonds are established by marriages of convenience similar to medieval European traditions. Loose affiliation gives them flexibility and rapid adaptability to changes in market forces. *Gremio*, translated "brotherhood," is a political factor identifying the cartels as major interest groups certain nations must take into account when formulating and implementing policy.¹⁹

The highest echelons of the trafficking business profit most. The illusion of unlimited profitability is also found at the lower end of the distribution spectrum. The most disposable, small entrepreneurs, called *hormigas* (ants), tend to bear the brunt of violent repercussions that come with drug trafficking.

Drug traffickers have an ability to exploit legal or administrative loopholes in a source, transit, or arrival country. They maintain, and masterfully use, reserves of expendable cash, communication and intelligence systems, and cheap labor to evade or undermine law

¹⁸ United States Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, (U)*, March 1997, 140.

¹⁹ John Holden-Rhodes, *Sharing the Secrets: Open Source Intelligence and the War on Drugs*, (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1997) 49.

enforcement efforts. They can swiftly change smuggling routes, intimidate or bribe law enforcement officials and witnesses, have laws modified, or swiftly purge their own elements that have been compromised.

CHAPTER 4

The Key Southwest Border Counterdrug Organizations

Joint Task Force-Six

General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the driving force behind the creation of JTF-6 which stood up November 1989. Located at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas it maintains an average staff of 150 personnel, two-thirds of which are Army with the balance from other services and the civilian sector. The reporting chain from JTF-6 goes through the Army's Forces Command to U.S. Atlantic Command and upward to the Secretary of Defense. In 1996, JTF-6's Area of responsibility (AOR) was expanded beyond its original four southwest border states to include the entire continental United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Funding support for this expansion did not occur. Like most DoD organizations that have experienced force reductions and budget cuts, JTF-6 faced significant challenges with this expanded AOR. Its operating budget has been severely threatened as mission requirements and commitments increased.

JTF-6 provides five types of military support to Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (DLEAs.) Mission areas include aviation MEDEVAC, reconnaissance, sensor deployment and use, and transportation missions. Often reconnaissance and sensor tasks are combined with Detection and Monitoring (D&M) missions. These have very specific rules of conduct and engagement along with rigorous pre-execution guidelines before specific DoD approval is granted for the mission.²⁰ Operational support, that performed by the actual military units

²⁰ JTF-6 Command Briefing to author, 21 October 1997. Also the author had previous command experience with D&M missions and is quite familiar with the pre-execution legal oversight that is required.

conducting the missions, always includes a robust tactical training plan to improve warfighting skills of participating units.

JTF-6 provides specific military skills to Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (DLEAs) with mobile training teams (MTT's) and technology demonstrations. Rapid support consists of a standing Rapid Support Unit (RSU), Special Forces elements formed for critical short notice reconnaissance (detection) missions. Their response time is advertised as 48 hours anywhere in the JTF-6 AOR. Engineer support is frequently requested for road improvements, border fence construction and repair, and light installation. Intelligence training is provided by military specialists to the who also assist with imagery interpretation, linguistic support, and analysis.

The JTF-6 theater strategy's goal is to assist DLEAs by disrupting at least 50% of the major drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) smuggling operations through October 1999. Commander, JTF-6 has no tasking authority, the capability to reach out to forces within CONUS and directly assign them missions. Units participating in JTF-6 missions are all volunteers from the individual services and their components. This is a unique military situation. JTF-6, aware that counterdrug missions are non-traditional, is extraordinarily sensitive to each unit's Mission Essential Tasks List (METL), those specific military training evolutions devoted to promoting combat readiness and reported through the Status of Readiness and Training System (SORTS), having visibility at the highest level of DoD. Counterdrug missions have received frequent criticism, mostly by nonparticipants, that unit combat readiness suffers. On close examination this criticism is unfounded. Emphasis on METLs during these missions substantiates the

opposite: readiness improves.²¹ Units also receive extensive legal and intelligence oversight, logistical, communications and fiscal support.²²

Operation Alliance

Operation Alliance, the interagency law enforcement group comprised principally of U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Border Patrol and DEA senior membership, stood up in El Paso, Texas in 1986 to bring a composite law enforcement solution to drug trafficking along the southwest border. Initially, *Operation Alliance* had the sponsorship of the Vice President which provided leverage when competing for resources and priority. This sponsorship was lost when ONDCP was created. Several years later the prestige and status of *Operation Alliance* waned. Its influence was partially restored by the creation of a high level working group called The Interdiction Committee, (TIC) consisting of the Director of the FBI, the Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Customs Commissioner. Meeting quarterly they have focused on southwest border issues and reassess priorities.

Operation Alliance's function is to promote interagency cooperation and coordinate DLEAs for interdiction, intelligence and investigation.²³ Positioned to transform strategic guidance into operational application *Operation Alliance* maintains a Joint Command Group (JCG), a problem solving and information sharing/coordinating forum for current operations. Its membership includes 27 federal, state, local DLEAs and military representation, derived from four principal states it serves, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California and federal representation from the Washington, D.C. arena. Day-to-day leadership of *Operation Alliance* is

²¹ Interview at JTF-6 by author, 20 October 1997.

²² JTF-6 Command Briefing, 21 October 1997.

²³ Mendel and Munger, 38.

provided by the Senior Tactical Coordinator, a senior civil servant, who serves a two year tour on a rotational basis between representatives from Customs, DEA and U.S. Border Patrol.

Operation Alliance maintains no separate budget; it is dependent on ad-hoc funding from its diverse membership. In 1992 *Operation Alliance* updated its original southwest border strategy published in 1990. Accepted then by all members it has not been updated since.²⁴ A two part southwest border campaign plan was also drafted with JTF-6 assistance. The first part is the campaign's priorities and objectives and the second, supporting plans or programs to fulfill phased objectives. The plan's primary objective is similar to JTF-6's: disrupt drug trafficking and dismantle major DTOs.

The *Operation Alliance* campaign plan also incorporates the DEA/FBI Southwest Border (SWB) regional Operations Plan, the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) SWB Action Plan for ground interdiction, U.S. Customs air interdiction, U.S. Coast Guard maritime interdiction, the JTF-6 Southwest Border Support Plan and actions of other federal, state and local agencies. *Operation Alliance's* plan allows as much interface with Mexican counterdrug agencies as possible to counter drug trafficking, organized crime, and money laundering.

Operation Alliance maintains another program called the Special Operations Notification System (SONS) to ensure coordination and deconfliction without compromising operational, security of DLEA activities in the four participating border states. Designed to provide officer safety in the field, SONS disseminates routine reports to participating agencies to heighten their situational awareness. Conversely, participating agencies also withhold information to preserve their own. operational security.

²⁴ Operation Alliance, Operational Mission Briefing to author, El Paso, Texas, 20 October 1997.

Operation Alliance works with JTF-6 to establish long range requirements for Title 10 (federal) military support to the customer LEA agencies it serves. It operates as the southwest border counterdrug "nexus" or primary validator for military support, deconflicts the civil agencies' requests and also coordinates use of the National Guard (Title 32) forces. This has not always worked as intended.²⁵ Tactical units operating in the field are frequently unaware of parallel operations because information is withheld in the organizational labyrinth. Inaccurate assumptions are made that liaison officers will pass timely updates to those with a need to know. Often supervisors do not understand the balance necessary between operational security and the hazards of deconflicting parallel or duplicative operations.

For all its ascribed functions, *Operation Alliance* has no sense of permanency and a very small staff handling a huge undertaking. It has no authority that directs activities of its participants; it operates only with consensus. If there is no consensus then action is stalled.

Southwest Border Intelligence

Also located near *Operation Alliance* and JTF-6 is the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC.) EPIC, established in 1974 under DEA auspices, focuses on narcotics and aliens. It analyzes and disseminates intelligence products that span from tactical through strategic levels of drug law enforcement. DLEAs use intelligence products differently than traditional military organizations because they weight them for evidentiary use rather than for offensive/defensive considerations. When DoD counterdrug support forces operate with civil DLEAs conflicting

²⁵ Disclosure to author by both *Operation Alliance* and JTF-6 officials. Author has also experienced similar problems in the field while executing counterdrug missions, especially encountering NG troops with no prior knowledge of their mission nor emplacements.

concepts and the lack of intelligence interface between these two organizations becomes readily apparent.²⁶

EPIC operates with a staff from 15 various agencies. DEA provides the largest share, about 60%, with U.S. Customs Service, INS and USCG providing the remainder. Their objective is to provide real time operational leads to law enforcement officers based on intelligence analysis drawn from EPIC's database.²⁷

For years EPIC did not enjoy a good reputation for customer service nor interagency cooperation. They claim to be turning that reputation around, though burdened with massive upgrades to their extensive database management system their responsiveness is still hampered.²⁸

²⁶ interview by author with Joseph Long, DEA Special Agent, EPIC, El Paso, Texas, 21 October 1997.

²⁷ Mendel and Munger, 51.

²⁸ interview with Special Agent Long by author

CHAPTER 5

Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities

The counterdrug situation along the southwest border can be analyzed by categorizing main components of strength and relative weakness in opposing forces. The U.S. counterdrug effort along the southwest border, is an example of an adversarial relationship between two powers; one a defined nation with its traditional sources of national power, and the other, an amorphous group of *transnational* drug producing and trafficking organizations.²⁹

Four subcomponents germane to this analysis are: (1) centers of gravity, (2) critical capabilities, (3) critical requirements and (4) critical vulnerabilities. All related, the definitions for these subcomponents are extracted from Dr. Strange's work and are found in Appendix A.³⁰

The *Transnational* Drug Producing/Trafficking Cartel

Two centers of gravity were examined. Though interrelated they were analyzed separately. If the affiliated critical vulnerabilities were fully exploited efforts of the cartel could be halted.

A. Center of Gravity: WEALTH

Critical Capabilities: producing drugs, refining, storing/transporting, financing, distributing, protecting their assets, planning.

²⁹ Peter A. Lupsha, "Transnational Crime: Organized Crime Versus the Nation-State", *Transnational Organized Crime* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 21. "Transnational" is more applicable in this context vice "global" or "international." The implication is decreased significance of sovereign borders and an increased capability to operate beyond legal jurisdiction of states.

³⁰ Dr. Joe Strange, 2nd Edition, 3.

Critical Requirements: property, industrial resources, banking/financial exchange, security apparatus, strategy, demand for drugs, precursor chemicals, willing labor pool, geographic isolation, lack of law enforcement or judicial system, simplicity of transit. Critical Vulnerabilities: reduced drug demand, scarcity of precursor chemicals, lack of operational security, poor deception, incorruptible government, poor risk assessment.

B. Center of Gravity: ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Critical Capabilities: "bonding" (arranged marriages, familial, business traditions), coercive ability, capability to corrupt, command and control, *SEIZE THE INITIATIVE*.

Critical Requirements: loyalties, deception, secrecy (compartmentalization) (*OPERATIONAL SECURITY*), physical security, corrupting influence (cash, barter, partnership), weapons, psychological leverage (blackmail, intimidation), intelligence, communications/information management.

Critical Vulnerabilities: counterintelligence, inferior information operations, questionable loyalties, resistance to intimidation or corruption by opponent, psychological leverage (constant pursuit-"fugitive" syndrome.)

No study of power between opposing forces is complete without examining strengths and weaknesses of the "friendly" side. The example identified here is more closely related and will be treated as a single center of gravity.³¹

³¹ This example is adapted from the work of Cdr Thomas S. Carlson, USN, *The Threat of Transnational Organized Crime to U.S. National Security: A Policy Analysis using a Center of Gravity Framework*, (Quantico, VA: USMC Command and Staff College, 1997) 18.

Friendly Centers of Gravity: GOVERNABILITY and WELL-BEING of POPULACE

Critical Capabilities: promote political competence, stimulate economy, protect public health, provide for security, mobilize the national will, coordinate and act across a wide number of public and private organizations, *SEIZE THE INITIATIVE*.

Critical Requirements: free, fair and frequent selection of leadership, widespread participation in political system, fairness/equity, positive economic and social development, regime acceptance by social and economic population blocs, informed public, popular "stake" in society, sustainable growth, competent government and private agencies, legal and judicial infrastructure, *SOPHISTICATED INTELLIGENCE MANAGEMENT*, discipline and training, legitimacy, credible capacity to coerce, interagency cooperation and synergy of effort.

Critical Vulnerabilities: civil liberties exploited/violated, insufficient judicial system, lack of political will, public uninformed, economic downturn, self-serving organizations, corruptible officials.

These analyses are important. The conflict between these two opponents has a mutual goal of undermining each other's centers of gravity. The victor in this struggle will be the one who can skillfully weaken the center of gravity by identifying and exploiting the other's critical vulnerabilities, and do so by expending fewest resources. Chapter 10 will discuss the most significant of these as they relate to the southwest border.

CHAPTER 6

Misapplication of Military Power

DLEAs, assisted by DoD, have been unsuccessful disrupting the flow of illegal drugs across the southwest border for almost ten years. The failure is not due to lack of presence, commitment nor dedication of individuals assigned to interdicting organizations. Policy or strategic shortcomings have inhibited success. Organizations, from the largest federal departments and agencies, to the smallest local police force, have not effectively adapted nor coordinated their interdiction efforts to achieve national synergy of effort.

The Reluctant Military

Senior officials in the Department of State rate deterring drug trafficking as their number three priority, yet assign a very low funding priority.³² Counterparts in DoD similarly lament that their counterdrug priority is still too low, but resource competition for other missions is just too fierce.³³ Briefings and posture statements from the warfighting CINCs and the National Military Strategy speak forcefully about counterdrug efforts. Rhetoric and intentions are good, yet the level of effort and effectiveness remains inconsistent. Seasoned, but frustrated officials, have remarked with characteristic cynicism "[that]...the unwritten U.S. Government policy on drugs is to lose efficiently vice winning effectively."³⁴

DoD, since the start of its involvement in counterdrug operations, has employed units in a tentative and conservative fashion. Issues about legal restrictions, intelligence oversight

³² DOD Counterdrug official, interviewed 24 Oct 1997, Washington, D.C. by author. Name withheld for non-attribution purposes.

³³ Senior officer, JCS, presentation to MC WAR Class, 24 Mar 1998, Washington DC.

Name withheld by author for non-attribution purposes.

³⁴ see note 4. Same official.

responsibilities, even concerns about corruption were causes for discomfort with participating commanders. Another concern was stated by a military commander "...don't believe for a minute I can execute that kind of drug role as an enhancement to my readiness in my traditional military role."³⁵ His remark reflects the aversion by some in the military aversion to the gray area and non-traditional role of interdicting drug trafficking. As stated earlier, there is little evidence, if any, that units participating in JTF-6 counterdrug operations have lost their combat edge.

A Bad Policy

JTF-6 has enjoyed many years of tactical success and has provided quality service to the nation, but a recent tactical catastrophe exposed a flawed DoD policy and demonstrated a limit of military employment in the counterdrug effort.

A teenage U.S. citizen was shot and killed in May 1997 by a U.S. Marine NCO leading a four man element on a JTF-6 counterdrug ground reconnaissance mission near the Texas border town of Redford. Subsequent intensive investigations revealed Rules of Engagement (ROE) were not violated nor was there probable cause to criminally prosecute the Marines. The controversy did not end there. Questions posed by advocates of outraged Redford citizens were "how could this happen and how could forces sent to protect us fire on their own citizens?"³⁶ Criminal exonerations and public furor aside, the policy that allowed ground troops to conduct this type of mission was suspended indefinitely by the Secretary of Defense. Federal troops employed in an inappropriate role brought an unintended consequence.

³⁵ Holden-Rhodes, 61.

³⁶ Mr. Jim Matlack, Director AFSC Washington Office, interview with author 20 February 1998.

The National Drug Control Strategy was not weakened by this incident, nor did drug traffickers gain a significant advantage. They had achieved that earlier. Traffickers have been bypassing deployed reconnaissance units and have used more sophisticated smuggling techniques through U.S. ports of entry. Limitations posed by the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 preclude employing Title 10 (federal) troops at ports of entry, performing search and detention functions which are normally reserved for law enforcement agencies.³⁷ Instead, counterdrug troops are dispersed to remote expanses of public land parallel to the border, where they are usually unfamiliar with the cultural subtleties of the area.

Though DoD actions have reflected ambivalent policy toward the counterdrug effort, there are some bright spots. The Army National Guard is an "unsung hero" of the counterdrug effort. The Guard has clearly understood their mission, supported it in both action and spirit, and has the advantage of being drawn from units indigenous to the area they are employed. They are familiar with the people, terrain and law enforcement infrastructure they have come to so ably support. The Guard commitment to counterdrug is open-ended.

The Identity Crisis and Asymmetrical Approach

The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Cohn Powell, who directed the formation of JTF-6 in 1989, was quoted in the NY. Times:

"...because we fight and win the nation's wars, because we are warriors, we are also uniquely able to do some of these other new missions that are coming along--peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, disaster relief--you name it we can do it.. .But we never want to do it in such a way that we lose sight of the focus of why you have armed forces--to fight and win the nation's wars."³⁸

³⁷ Binnendijk and others, eds., 207.

³⁸ Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Narrows its Terms for its Peacekeepers", *New York Times*,

Another recent periodical posed a related question:

"Is the American military's purpose still 'fighting and winning our nation's wars ...or are America's enemies so few and feeble that U.S. troops can focus less on war and more on other problems throughout the world?'"³⁹

One answer speaks to these statements. America's military will continuously train and prepare to fight and win the nation's wars AND will be prepared to participate in less traditional roles, as long as these roles provide service to the nation. It means training and preparing for war will be harder as forces and budgets get smaller and the threat harder to define. Mental agility can overcome the challenge of fewer resources and wisdom can shape policies, strategies and tactics to deal with threats.

General C.C. Krulak, a Marine Corps visionary, has been delivering a speech titled *Ne Cras, Ne Cras: Not Like Yesterday-It Wasn't Like Yesterday*, a story about the defeat of the great Roman legions by German barbarians. The moral of the story is a superpower that presents a symmetrical and overwhelming approach "...ALWAYS, ...ALWAYS invites an asymmetrical counter."⁴⁰ The institutional weakness of the ancient Romans is relevant today. In strategy they were inflexible and resistant to change which hastened their downfall. In modern conflict opposing forces no longer attack each other's center(s) of gravity directly.

Drug trafficking organizations penetrating U.S. borders are card carrying members of a new chaotic warrior class.⁴¹ These stateless soldiers obscure their orders of battle while they

September 23, 1997, A-8.

³⁹ Richard J. Newman, "Can Peacekeepers Make War?", *U.S. News and World Report*, January 19, 1998, 38-44.

⁴⁰ Gen Charles C. Krulak, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Ne Cras, Ne Cras-Not Like Yesterday, It Wasn't Like Yesterday*, address given to the USMC War College, 9 December, 1997, also found on the Commandants Web Page (<http://www.usmc.mil>)

⁴¹ For an eloquent analysis of the rise of the non-state warrior and emerging warmaking entities not found in the mainstream of conventional military thought see Robert J. Bunker, "Epochal Change: War Over Social and Political Organization," *Parameters*, Summer 1997, 21.

merge with corporate entities and criminal organizations of the world. In the present and future DoD will be required to perfect civil-military relationships, develop and encourage intellectual agility and blend counterdrug operations in all military taskings.

CHAPTER 7

National Interests and Security Threats

Defining the National Interest

"National interest" is one of the more abused political terms of expediency. Used to convince a reader or listener about the urgency of a particular cause, the term has lost much credibility in its frequent association with the "crisis du jour."

A Commission on America's National Interests was established in 1996 to catalyze debate about various national interests and their priority. The membership of distinguished statesmen, academics, military officers and other government officials categorized four types of interests (in descending order:) **vital, extremely important, just important** and finally, **less important** or **secondary**. After painstaking deliberation, eleven national interests were identified in the category "extremely important" (the second tier of priorities.) Number ten on this list read "suppress, contain, and combat terrorism, transnational crime, and drugs."⁴²

Thirty-one national interests were identified overall. Clarity and logic achieved by this commission set the hierarchy of American national interests. Their findings provide a rational, holistic appraisal where the drug problem stands relative to other pressing issues of the day.

⁴² The Commission on America's National Interests, *America's National Interests*, Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, 1996. ("**Extremely important national interests** are conditions that, if compromised, would severely prejudice, but not strictly imperil the ability of the U.S. government to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation." Examples in this tier included protection against WMD attack, preventing hegemony in Europe or Asia, preventing the emergence of hostile powers on U.S. borders or in control of seas, prevent collapse of major global systems, ensure survival of allies.)

What is the National Security Threat?

Senator John Kerry, the former Chairman and current ranking Democrat on the Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations, stated five major national security threats. He listed nuclear and conventional weapons proliferation, environmental degradation, fundamentalism and nationalism, struggles of the human condition, and the exploitation of all these phenomena by international criminals. The last threat is most relevant to the national security and criminal activities on the southwest border.

Drug trafficking organizations that routinely exploit U.S. borders manipulate the other four security challenges to achieve their ends. The world's population will increase from 6 billion to 8 billion between 2000-2005. By then 83% of the world's wealth will be controlled by 20% of the population. The gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" will expand conditions that favor more exploitation.⁴³

This forecast does not promote stability and goodwill among nations. The U.S. will contend with weakened nation-states where global crime and its close relative, terrorism, have suborned national working institutions. Vestiges of legitimacy have or will be lost. Colombia is a prime example. The predominant Colombian cartel, the Cali, continuously influences existing government decisions and policy. They have gone beyond penetrating the Colombian government and support more frequent guerrilla engagements. Narco-elements are now engaged in a major "war of will and sustainment" and Colombia is poised to lose.⁴⁴ There are indications

⁴³ Senator John Kerry, *The New War: The Web of Crime That Threatens America's Security*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997) 14.

⁴⁴ Robert D. Novak, "Who Lost Colombia?", *Washington Post*, April 9, 1998, A-19. (Novak is quoting Maj Andy Messing of the National Defense Council Foundation.)

that a trend like this is developing in Mexico with its trafficking cartels. In either case, the flow of illegal drugs northward will only increase.

There are three other pertinent features of organized crime to consider: (1) it corrupts any financial system it comes in contact with and directly affects the national economy, (2) it permeates and taints social and legal systems in society and ultimately cannot be confined to the country of origin, (3) it obscures traditional relationships between countries.⁴⁵

Criminal activities on, or within, U.S. borders, with accompanying levels of violence, drain national treasure, accelerate social decay, and directly threaten prosperity and quality of life for U.S. inhabitants.⁴⁶ Greedy traffickers are not constrained by borders or laws. Their activities form rival economies that easily move across sovereign borders.⁴⁷ Strategic links between transnational criminal groups are growing. Terrorist and other radical groups that have lost state or other traditional sources of sponsorship have now found new financial backers in the drug traffickers.⁴⁸

The U.S. is not severely threatened, but under constant pressure, internally and externally, to get better control of the domestic drug problem. The scourge of cross border drug trafficking is only a force multiplier for elements wishing to advance their cause at the expense of the national power of the United States. Effects on civil liberties, prosperity and health of this nation have already been felt.

⁴⁵ Kerry, 91.

⁴⁶ Louis I. Shelley, "Transnational Organized Crime: An Imminent Threat to the Nation-State?", *Journal of International Affairs* 48, no. 2 (Winter 1995) 471.

⁴⁷ Roy Goodson and William J. Olson, "International Organized Crime", *Society* 32, no.2, (January/February 1995): 19,22,25.

⁴⁸ Carlson,6-7.

CHAPTER 8

Improving Intelligence and Operational Security

Traditional law enforcement intelligence lacks two key ingredients of the intelligence process: **interpretation** and **forecasting**. The national drug intelligence community, including EPIC as a major member, has been driven by institutional bias, sometimes described as "turfism" or the zealous protection of one's own role to the exclusion of other organizations' needs to coordinate and interoperate. These conflicts are legendary, especially between EPIC and the military.⁴⁹ The situation has improved over the years but intelligence elements are still deficient. Law enforcement emphasis on intelligence seeks preservation of evidentiary data over actionable information. Focus on little "i" (state/local) at the expense of big "I" (national/strategic) has hampered interagency cooperation. Intelligence management shown to produce short term prosecution results vice long term exploitation of traffickers vulnerabilities has been rewarded by policy initiatives tagged onto funding levers, leading to program longevity, not effectiveness.⁵⁰

Focus on tactical and operational intelligence has been accompanied by expected "firewalls" organizations use to protect operational security or DLEA evidence. This information could also be used by several organizations working on different parts of the same problem. Often the product generated for common use is nothing but a recent history of the traffickers strengths and activities.

JTF-6 faces a more complicated version of this problem on the southwest border. Frequently hard intelligence exists about movement of product from a source area into a transit country, in this case, Mexico. The product is accurately tracked northward via land or Mexico's

⁴⁹ command visit by author 20 October 1997.

⁵⁰ Holden-Rhodes, 21.

contiguous waters. Intelligence flow stops abruptly when the product reaches a point about 200 miles south of the border. A huge lapse of HUMINT (human intelligence), due to the paucity of cooperative diplomatic and bilateral law enforcement relationships between the U.S. and Mexico, explains this failure. These relationships are slowly improving. However, critical intelligence loss (sarcastically called the *black hole*) has kept the operational and strategic initiative from DLEAs and with the traffickers.⁵¹

Drug traffickers in the southwest succeed because they have an efficient intelligence network. John Holden-Rhodes, in his straightforward criticism of the U.S. counterdrug effort, cites the need for more effective drug counterintelligence and lists seven recommendations:

1. *operations must be guided by intelligence*
2. *develop intelligence levels of effectiveness at all levels*
3. *decentralize the approach toward intelligence; use appropriate technology; emphasize the intelligence customer; "desanitize" classified material; make more information accessible to a wider range of customers*
4. *develop a security/personnel screening system*
5. *intelligence systems include a secure means to transmit their product*
6. *improve operational security and counterintelligence for DLEAs to fight corruption*
7. *produce strategic intelligence to provide policymakers with an accurate assessment*⁵²

Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) is not a value rejection of classified information, but affirms that the intelligence business has changed. DLEAs must understand what happens as

⁵¹ Major S. Deakin, Intelligence Officer, J-2 Staff, JTF-6, El Paso, TX interview by author 21 October 1997.

⁵² Holden-Rhodes, 177.

drugs, bound for their area, enter this country. They need to be involved in strategic planning. Strategic intelligence, in short supply, assumes an understanding of the overall implications of drug trafficking activities and impacts upon immediately adjacent and high level jurisdictions.

The U.S. Coast Guard serves as a prototype for model federal law enforcement counterdrug intelligence. A unique federal law enforcement agency with military attributes, it works both types of intelligence; the predictive classified type as well as traditional law enforcement evidentiary types. The Coast Guard has enjoyed great interdiction success as well as a reputation for protecting its sources. In over 12 years it has dropped only two court cases rather than compromise a confidential source.⁵³

⁵³

Holden-Rhodes, 78.

CHAPTER 9

Organization is the Key!

Challenging the Concept of "National Defense"

National defense is usually associated with the Department of Defense, the traditional provider of that function. It's unique operating capabilities, built upon a foundation of robust logistics, experience, up-to-date technology, forward thinking, rapid responsiveness, flexible deployability, resides upon a precise hierarchy centered on unity of command. However, as threats to the nation's sources of power broaden, innovative methods and relationships should be forged to provide solutions. The transnational threat requires a non-traditional response that other U.S. organizations cannot adequately deliver. They lack sufficient operational capability. DoD has assisted in the past, but the time has now come to clearly redefine how the defense of all elements of national power can be restructured.

The Interagency Challenge

General Krulak was just one of several individuals that called for overhaul of the national security architecture. The National Defense Panel (NDP) recommended the "...defense support structure and infrastructure be fundamentally reformed." The interagency process should be significantly strengthened to include statutory realignment of the National Security Council to include the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General.⁵⁴ Some of the NDP recommendations included:

- (1) *create an interagency cadre of professionals*
- (2) *a national security curriculum*

⁵⁴ Currently both retain membership on the NSC, though not statutory, but with the authority of PDD-2, signed January 20, 1993 by President Clinton.

(3) create a fully integrated national crisis center that consolidates foreign policy, intelligence, military representatives and domestic agency personnel

(4) develop a unified, multimedia communication system to allow better interoperability

(5) revitalize human intelligence (HUMINT)

(6) review the entire national security structure to better anticipate and shape changes in the international environment; focus on interagency long range strategic planning

(7) streamline the transfer of funds within and among agencies"

In the concluding remarks of *Ne Cras*, General Krulak called for a move beyond "jointness," the operating concept institutionalized by DoD since 1986. The nation now needs to move swiftly into the interagency mode and beyond. He stated the case for a "virtual" command and control organization to network through all levels of American society. Its purpose will be to reinforce traditional elements of national power by taking maximum advantage of subject matter experts, knowledge and information systems that can add leverage to the national interest at stake.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Report of the National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C., December 1997, 57-67.

⁵⁶ Krulak, *Ne Cras*, 1997.

CHAPTER 10

A View Toward the Future

During the past decade the U.S. adopted a siege mentality combating illegal drugs. Agencies designated to reduce supply were formed into loose coalitions, replete with all the advantages and disadvantages of their relationships. From the traffickers point of view, this evokes a thought born in Napoleon's time: it is much better to oppose a coalition, implying its vulnerabilities are easier to exploit. Drug interdiction solutions are far from perfect as policy, strategies and implementation are debated or stalled. Assumptions also need retooling. If they are sound they lead to equally sound policies.

Five assumptions should be considered:

1. *This problem is a bonafide threat to U.S. national interests and security.*
2. *Drug use and related crime is an intractable social problem.*
3. *Supply and demand counterdrug programs are mutually complimentary.*
4. *Drugs cannot be stopped exclusively at their source.*
5. *The expression "war on drugs" is a worn out political metaphor with little meaning.*⁵⁷

This paper surveyed factors that affect counterdrug efforts from the national through the operational level on the southwest border. It will conclude by summarizing the effects of these factors from historical, policy/strategy, intelligence, and organizational perspectives.

History Teaches Lessons

There are many uncanny resemblances today to the era of the 1920's and 1930's in America. Until very recently, U.S. interdiction was very heavily focused on controlling the

⁵⁷ adapted from John Holden-Rhodes (*Sharing the Secrets etc.*) construct of an "interest based policy" that reflects national interests. 172-174.

source of drug production and distribution. Diplomatic efforts, to gain leverage, have proven to be mediocre, more rhetoric than substance. Even the reviled certification process has gained less than anticipated, but does offer the U.S. public the image that their government is serious about combating drug trafficking by penalizing countries that, in the U.S. judgment, are not doing enough. Like the 1930's, the common U.S. solution has been to create a new level of bureaucracy to take on new tough challenges vice reorienting the existing establishments. Unlike the era of seventy years ago, the federal government is finally stepping up by informing and educating the public about the dangers of drug trafficking and abuse, instead of relying on state, local or private agencies.

Personalities Make a Difference

The coalition style approach to combating drug abuse in America will remain for some time to come. It reflects the inefficiency of a democracy, but that liability is consciously accepted by the American people. The interagency process will be the template that most federal undertakings will be conducted upon. Selection of the right people to man key leadership positions will be crucial to make the interagency process work. Counterproductive competition found in various counterdrug agencies could be minimized with skillful selections.

The appointment of General McCaffrey was a positive sign that the Clinton administration may be making a stronger commitment to assuming leadership for counterdrug efforts. His appointment was tarnished by accusations of an "election year makeover," but his character and force of personality have already caused needed ripples on the national scene.⁵⁸ Working as a committed agent for change General McCaffrey operates like a man against a

⁵⁸ comment by Senator Orrin Hatch to Hearst Wire Service, February 27, 1996.

stopwatch. He may make formidable progress before the next presidential elections, but will his successor have the predator instincts necessary to reform the domestic counterdrug architecture before he/she can successfully take on the cartels?

Policies and Strategies

In areas of foreign relations many counterdrug initiatives are underway. As mentioned before, the certification process is yielding marginal returns. The U.S. is doing better providing law enforcement assistance and training to source and transit countries and gaining credibility demonstrating a robust demand reduction program. The key foreign policy initiative is assisting source and transit countries to retain a high level of legitimacy. This can be done by helping them protect their most critical vulnerabilities.

Domestic policies in the U.S. are improving, mostly due to the initiatives of ONDCP. Stated again, the public is being informed about the national drug problem by a sophisticated demand reduction public relations program. The benefit potential to U.S. counterdrug efforts are enormous. A key holistic link, this could raise public awareness and support for other demand or supply reduction initiatives.

Military support will be essential for future counterdrug efforts, in spite of the setback suffered in Redford, Texas. The type and level of military support, except ground detection and monitoring missions, is adequate for domestic southwest border counterdrug support to DLEAs. A renewed emphasis should be placed on providing training to resident LEAs to bolster military skills they need to fulfill their roles. Problems with military involvement are mostly leadership; failure to recognize that traditional roles are less relevant.

Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities, Again...

Concerted efforts, both nationally and regionally, are necessary against the numerous **critical vulnerabilities** of the cartels. Some vulnerabilities are more critical than others and should receive priority of interdiction effort. Listed below they are:

- *reduce domestic drug demand*
- *bolster source and transit countries' abilities to retain legitimacy*
- *exploit traffickers' counterintelligence, information systems. Break down the human loyalties; create a fugitive mindset; use psychological leverage; break down their operational security.*

Friendly vulnerabilities need protection. The most critical are:

- *enhance US. political will*
- *keep the public well informed*
- *minimize the effect of self-serving organizations (protect the "coalition!")*
- *zealously deter corruption*

The most **critical capability** the U.S. can achieve is to seize the initiative; deny the opponent his ability to seize the initiative.

The NDCS is a large government project and like other large scale projects has been plagued by inherent difficulties of policy implementation. A concept called "forward mapping", where policymakers (federal counterdrug planners) consider instruments and resources and try to link them with the incentives desired by ultimate target groups (state and local law enforcement) is necessary. A reverse concept, called "backward mapping," may also have utility. The intent is

to ensure the design of the implementation process takes place during the design of policy. Often the incomplete afterthought results in expedience or major policy flaws.⁵⁹

Improve Intelligence Management

The U.S. supply reduction initiatives will succeed when long term, intelligence driven operations are undertaken to hurt the trafficking organizations. Problems with collection are minuscule compared to inefficient policies on how to manage, analyze and forecast. Turf disputes on how intelligence is managed must cease. Easier said than done, new approaches are available to help this troubled segment of the counterdrug community. At the federal level the Director, ONDCP should take a more directive, vice coordinating role, emphasizing the analytical element of intelligence production, more use of OSINT, and ensure supply-side intelligence directly supports demand-side programs and vice versa. He should also ensure the intelligence community accurately informs (to the greatest extent practicable) the American public⁶⁰

Other tangible recommendations proposed by Holden-Rhodes are:

1. *establish state operated, federally funded and supported drug intel centers*
2. *rely chiefly on OSINT; support with secure communications*
3. *expand and perfect a personnel security system for law enforcement*
4. *on-site analytical intelligence support from federal intelligence representatives for law enforcement agencies*
5. *series of mobile law enforcement belts, unobtrusive to public, possibly 75 miles in depth; could change location in accordance with reactions of traffickers*

⁵⁹ Richard Elmore, *Encyclopedia of Policy*, (New York: Houghton Muffin Company, 1988)

25.

⁶⁰ Alfred C. Maurer, Marion D. Tunstall, and James M Keagle, *Intelligence: Policy and Process* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press), 1985, 54.

6. rebuild a deep-look capability into Mexico (radar, LIDAR) for 400 miles

7. re-evaluate asset forfeiture seizures. Some U.S. citizens have been injured by the misguided execution of asset seizure by DLEAs. The resulting damage far outweighs the monetary benefits of the program.

The current Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs), which are highly quantitative, include amounts of drugs seized, the interdiction rate, the street price of drugs and a support factor.

Inadequate, these should be expanded to include qualitative measures such as intelligence sharing, centralized command, decentralized operations, use of better human intelligence (HUMINT) and more direct support and leadership to state and local DLEAs vice waiting for their requests for assistance.⁶¹

How to Organize

ONDCP's intense efforts to work the interagency process at the national level will eventually yield positive results. DoD counterdrug commitment and resolve could be manifested in a change to the Unified Command Plan (UCP.) One change recommended by the National Defense Panel was the creation of the Americas Command for homeland defense as well as the western hemisphere.⁶² This command could be the primary tasking source to direct the services to provide operational counterdrug support that currently is managed inefficiently. Requirements for units and missions are identified well in advance by JTF-6 and should be tasked by one central authority vice advertised to volunteers.

JTF-6 is best poised of all regional organizations to succeed. However, they are currently bound to relationships and policies that do not promote success. Approaching its tenth year of operation, the time has come to disband this task force. Its title alone implies it was formed to

⁶¹ Holden-Rhodes, 178.

⁶² Report of the National Defense Panel, 72.

deal with a transitory problem, when the opposite is clearly evident. Problems of the southwest border are acute to the citizens residing in those states. The solution must come from an interagency effort. CINCPAC and CINCSOUTH have stood up counterdrug Joint Interagency Task Forces in their AOR's and have experienced success. USACOM should do the same by consolidating JTF-6, EPIC and *Operation Alliance* to obtain better synergy of effort in the region. This will be difficult due to the increased numbers of politically popular law enforcement dominated High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs), which have successfully competed for a larger share of federal counterdrug funds.

Closing Remarks

The phenomena of globalization and regionalization are too strong to reverse, nor would it be prudent to do so. Initiatives such as the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have made borders seem less relevant, but issues of national sovereignty are still vital to the American public. It is critical that the U.S. remain engaged in partnerships with legitimate nations to combat illegal drug trafficking. Domestically, the U.S. can do much more to rid itself of organizational inefficiencies that expose its critical vulnerabilities to drug trafficking organizations. DoD will remain involved, but the threats of unhampered drug trafficking are less severe to the military. They are critical to economic, social and political well being of this nation. The following quote, abridged and taken out of context, reflects the turning point America faces against this national threat. It summarizes three fatal maladies: the failure to learn, the failure to anticipate and the failure to adapt.

"[the answer]...entailed developing new techniques and developing a doctrine that emphasized flexibility over rigidity and innovation over obedience to long established principles. ...of all the forms of

institutional failure, the failure to learn is the least excusable." ⁶³

⁶³ Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991)

APPENDIX A

Definitions of Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities

The model used for this analysis was developed at Marine Corps University by Dr. Joe Strange. His intent was to precisely expand upon some Clausewitzian theories of warfare and their subcomponents.⁶⁴

Centers of Gravity: "primary sources of moral or physical strength, power and resistance"

Critical Capabilities: "primary abilities which merits a Center of Gravity to be identified as such in the context of a given scenario, situation or mission."

Critical Requirements: "essential condition, resources and means for a critical capability to be fully operative."

Critical Vulnerabilities: "critical requirements or components thereof which are deficient, or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction or attack (moral/physical harm) in a manner achieving decisive results-the smaller resources and effort applied and the smaller the risk and cost, the better."

⁶⁴ Dr. Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity & Critical Vulnerabilities*, 2nd Edition, (Quantico, VA: Defense Automated Printing Service Center) 1997.

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